

Bleak House – Audition Piece**Tulkinghorn / Gridley / Smallweed**

TULKINGHORN: In the past, Mr Gridley, you have been a great nuisance to me, so much so that I have sought the protection of the law from your importunate behaviour. However, it now turns out that you are in a position to do me a service, which, if performed to my satisfaction, shall lead me not only to forget your past impertinences, but to render what assistance I can with your case in Chancery, What do you say?

GRIDLEY: Begging your pardon, sir, I should like to know what *you* say.

TULKINGHORN: Do you mean in point of reward?

GRIDLEY: I mean in point of everything, sir

SMALLWEED: You brimstone fool!

TULKINGHORN: Please endeavour to contain yourself, Mr Smallweed.

GRIDLEY: What's he doing here?

TULKINGHORN: Mr Smallweed is a client of mine, and I believe, a creditor of yours.

SMALLWEED: Seventy two pound he owes me, and this note of hand not worth the paper it's writ on!

TULKINGHORN: If I understand Mr Smallweed right, shortly after leaving the army you borrowed a sum of money from him. What security did you offer?

GRIDLEY: Why, the legacy from my father, of course.

TULKINGHORN: And did Mr Smallweed accept this as security?

SMALLWEED: *(Cackles derisively)* Not likely, for I knows the ways of Chancery, and only a brimstone buffoon would accept such a security.

GRIDLEY: It's true that Mr Smallweed turned me down.

TULKINGHORN: And what security did he demand?

GRIDLEY: A note of hand from a gentleman, a bond.

TULKINGHORN: And what was the name of the gentleman who went security for you?

- GRIDLEY: He is dead, Mr Tulkinghorn.
- TULKINGHORN : And his name?
- GRIDLEY: Captain Hawdon.
- SMALLWEED: That's the fellow, but he never signed his name to nothin!
- TULKINGHORN: Mr Smallweed, at my request, passed the note of hand to me, and I quickly became convinced that it was never written by the captain, who was anyway in no position to issue bonds of this kind, but by yourself. What have you to say to that?
- GRIDLEY: I needed money. Mr Smallweed demanded security, so I gave it him. It mattered little whether the bond was genuine, anyway, since Hawdon had no money, and he was killed soon after.
- SMALLWEED: Oh no, my fine friend, he warn't killed, nohow. He lived on, for a while.
- GRIDLEY: What do you want from me? If you intend to prosecute me, then please do it. Otherwise, what good can come of this?
- TULKFNHORN: Mr Gridley, I requested Mr Smallweed to give me the note of hand because I wished to acquire a sample of Captain Hawdon's handwriting. Having now ascertained that the note is a forgery, I must ask you, do you have any examples of the man's handwriting? And if so, would you be so good as to pass them to me without further delay.
- SMALLWEED: Otherwise, you brimstone poll-parrot, we'll twist you, we'll screw you, we'll put your head in a vice. If you won't do it with a good grace, we'll make you do it with a bad one! Don't try us, Gridley! ,